

Indiana House of Representatives

News and Information

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ADAMS BILL ON ABANDONED VEHICLES UNANIMOUSLY PASSED OUT OF COMMITTEE

INDIANAPOLIS -- House Bill 1478, legislation authored by State Rep. Tiny Adams (D-Muncie), passed unanimously out of the House Committee on Roads and Transportation today.

The bill will raise the market value limit below which a public officer is authorized to dispose of an abandoned vehicle or parts at an automobile scrap yard. Currently, the market value limit is \$100. House Bill 1478 will raise the limit to \$500.

"This issue was brought to my attention last fall, when I attended a meeting of East Central Indiana towing companies," said Adams. "I feel that this is an important issue and worthy of new legislation."

At the moment, it takes up to two years to get rid of an abandoned vehicle. First, a police officer discovers an abandoned vehicle and fills out a 3S22 form for the vehicle. The car must be at least 10 years old, in poor condition and have a market value of \$100 or less in order for the officer to fill out the 3S22 form.

The car is then towed by a towing company, which is responsible for storing the car. Before the car can be sold, the state must check and recheck multiple times whether or not the car has a title and whether or not anyone has come forward to claim the car. Only 15 percent of abandoned cars are reclaimed.

Eventually an abandoned car will make it to auction. Because of the decrepit condition of these vehicles, they are rarely sold. The towing company is then responsible for removing all liquids from the car and transporting it to a scrap yard.

The towing companies rarely receive any compensation for their work. They tow the car for free, store it for free and dispose of it for free. In the rare instances where cars are sold, the state will compensate the towing company up to \$350 for their troubles.

House Bill 1478 would greatly streamline the disposal process for abandoned cars. Rather than holding abandoned cars for up to two years, the cars would only be held for 30 days. Only one title check would be run.

"Ample time would still be provided for car owners to retrieve their cars," said Adams.

"Overall, House Bill 1478 is good for everyone," he added. "Towing companies will no longer have to worry about storing large numbers of abandoned cars, the state will save money and, once these cars are scrapped, they will no longer be an eyesore."

House Bill 1478 now moves to the floor of the full House for further consideration.